

*Why evidence-based grant making?*

The most effective job training programs open up new opportunities and can ultimately help change a person's life. These programs result in meaningful employment in a career pathway that is well-suited to the individual and support economic mobility. At the same time, prioritizing high quality programs opens up resources to serve new participants. These programs serve populations with significant barriers to employment yet effectively reduce the number of job seekers who cycle in and out of low-quality or poor-fit jobs, thereby requiring repetitious support from the workforce system.

Embedding outcome-based applications and reporting in state workforce grant programs will help the state learn about the implementation, effectiveness, and cost of various approaches. The interventions that have been introduced by the workforce system to date have been producing a growing body of evidence that can be used to identify effective practices that help participants develop the skills required to find and maintain employment. Grant applicants will be encouraged to consider and identify applicable evidence. Similarly, the outcomes of pilot programs can be shared to incentivize replication if the measures are clearly defined and relevant to the priority outcomes.

Grant funding can be used to facilitate innovative approaches to improve job training programs and to scale proven methods that lead to better employment outcomes for workers and higher productivity for employers in Texas. With this in mind, Texas is implementing a two-pronged approach that will link grant funds directly to priority outcomes while continuing to support innovative practices. This approach will create incentives for grant applicants to identify and use program models that have demonstrated a record of effective outcomes. In order to continue to encourage innovative, but less- tested proposals, the state will be requesting performance data and effectiveness evidence. Evidence tiers have been defined to support a graduated method for programs and applicants to adapt to applying for evidence-based grants. Some grant programs in Texas have already introduced and defined performance-based outcomes metrics. Prior grant outcomes data will be required in the application process, where relevant.